

**TITLE 1:** “Ask the Doctor”

**TITLE 2:**

**DATE:** Fall 2005

**AUTHOR/S:** Marco Zucconi, MD

**KEYWORDS:**

- Symptoms

**ABSTRACT OVERVIEW:** One reader shares her symptoms wanting to know if she has RLS.

**COPY OF ARTICLE:**

**Q:** The symptoms I have can be best described by an overwhelming sensation of extremely hot



feet (although they feel cool on the outside) and an overwhelming need to cool them and move them. The result is an urge to do something with them – pull them, stretch them, whatever – to make it go away. The only relief I can find is the coolness of cotton sheets and the feeling of my bare feet on a cool floor. In the summer the problem gets especially bad. (I live in the warm climate of Spain.) Can you confirm that my problem is restless legs syndrome? Can it be helped by improving circulation?

**A:** You may have RLS, but it is difficult to be definite as you have not told us about two of the four diagnostic criteria: whether or not your symptoms are relieved by movement and whether they are worse in the evening. If you do not have these additional two criteria then you may have a peripheral neuropathy which may be diagnosed by a neurological examination. It is much less likely that your problem is due to poor circulation so treating circulation should not be helpful. If you do have all four diagnostic criteria then treatment with a dopaminergic drug (such as Requip, Mirapex or cabergoline) may be effective. Other choices for RLS include gabapentin or sedatives (for sleeping problems caused by RLS).

*Marco Zucconi, MD*